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Soviet Involvement in Africa

I. The USSR continues to act assertively in pursuing its political, economic and strategic goals in sub-Saharan Africa.

A. Politically, Moscow's goal is to increase its own influence at the expense of the West and the PRC. Moscow is the predominant foreign influence in Angola and Ethiopia. The Soviets are also influential in Mozambique and several smaller countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

B. On the economic side Moscow's success has been less remarkable. The Soviet Union wants to insure its access to any African raw materials it may need and position itself to deny or restrict Western access should Soviet policy makers decide this is necessary.

C. Strategically, Moscow wants access to port and air facilities to support its Indian Ocean fleet and to facilitate monitoring of Western naval activity in the Atlantic. Moscow has secured access to facilities in Ethiopia and Angola but these are not equal to those lost in Somalia

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and restricted in Guinea.

II. African countries have presented many opportunities to the Soviets in recent years because of their political instability, economic backwardness and lingering resentment toward Western colonial powers.

A. Moscow had no hand in creating the race issue in Africa, the fall of the Portuguese government that brought about their departure from Angola and Mozambique and Guinear-Bissau, or the Somali invasion of Ethiopia. In each case, Moscow reacted decisively and always on the side enjoying broad support among the African states.

B. The Soviets have also capitalized on Cuba's willingness to intervene in Africa and its acceptability to Africans as a "non-aligned," Third World state.

C. Moscow has used its ability and willingness to supply large amounts of military equipment to gain access to African countries. The supply capabilities it demonstrated in Ethiopia and Angola has impressed African states and raised questions about the West's will to resist Soviet advances.

III. While Moscow is moving on a broad front in sub-Saharan Africa, Soviet attention is focused primarily on Angola.

Ethiopia and Rhodesia.

A. In Angola, Moscow and Havana are concerned about their inability to halt the UNITA insurgency. UNITA is not able to bring down the Neto government, but it is highly disruptive, aggravates the economic problems confronting Neto and his foreign supporters and is taking an increasing toll among the Cubans.

B. Moscow's intervention in the Ethiopia-Somali conflict over the Ogaden was sudden and successful. Nonetheless, insurgency continues in the Ogaden and the Eritrean insurgency remains a serious problem and a source of contention between Moscow and Addis Ababa. Moscow presently favors a negotiated settlement but Mengistu wants a military solution.

C. Moscow remains the major foreign backer of the Patriotic Front which conducts the insurgency against the Rhodesian interim government. Moscow has to date carefully followed the lead of the PF and the Frontline states (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia) in dealing with the Rhodesian problem but has spoken out against the UK-US settlement plan.

1. Despite Soviet and Cuban efforts in training

and supplying ZAPU--the PF faction Moscow is closest to--ZAPU forces are no match for the Rhodesian security forces.

2. Moscow is concerned about this and is taking steps to try to improve ZAPU's military capabilities.

3. Moscow is increasingly concerned about the depth of Zambian President Kaunda's commitment to ZAPU and the PF. Moscow's concern stems from Zambia's serious economic problems, Kaunda's reluctance to allow more Soviets and Cubans to work with ZAPU and his [redacted] trip to London and Washington, and his continued good relations with the

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PRC. and his role in the Smith-Obando meetings.

IV. The Soviets are confronted with problems in Africa as a result of their growing presence and influence on the continent.

A. Most African states continue to distrust Soviet motives. This is true even in Angola.

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- B. African states also complain about poor Soviet performance in the economic development field and the low level of Soviet economic aid.
- C. In areas where there is a large Soviet presence, such as Angola and to a lesser extent Ethiopia, friction has developed between the Soviets and the local population.
- D. African nationalism may, over the long term, limit the extent of Soviet influence.